N°. IX.

THE THESPIAN MIRROR.

SATURDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 22, 1806.

Biographical Notice of MR. WILSON.

Mr. WILSON whose real name is BLAND, is brother to the celebrated Mrs. JORDAN. His mother, formerly an actress, was the daughter of a reputable Welch clergyman; she eloped with a military officer (a gentleman of fortune, then on a duty in *Wales*) to *Ireland*, where they were married, and had nine children, of whom GEORGE, the subject of the present sketch, was one.

After the first essays of Mrs. JORDAN in *Dublin*, under the assumed name of Miss FRANCES, her brother, being equally fascinated with the supposed charms of a theatrical life, assumed the sock and buskin, and entered upon the list of Thespian adventurers in that city. He was some time in St. Patrick's, Dublin, but left the kingdom on his sister's departure from the Irish stage. He afterwards performed in the Country Theatres of *Great Britain;* and at the recommendation of Mrs. JORDAN, was engaged at *Drury Lane*, where he made his *debut* in the character of *Sebastian*, in Shakspeare's comedy of "*Twelfth Night;* or *What you Will:*" on the evening of February 10th, 1790.

While on the boards of *Drury Lane*, Mr. BLAND united himself to the celebrated Miss ROMANZINI, who is the daughter of a Jewess, and was articled by her mother to the *Royal Circus*, having while young, discovered a fine voice, and considerable talent in the execution of music. She gradually acquired celebrity; and soon becoming an unrivalled favourite, was engaged at London, where she became Mrs. BLAND, and the mother of seven children. A separation from her husband took place, from some causes which have not been made public, but which has been attributed to a certain *trans-atlantic* fashionable breach of the matrimonial vow.

This circumstance occasioned Mr. BLAND's retirement from the metropolis, which he quitted in disgust, and came to *America*. His first appearance after his arrival in the *United States*, was on the stage in this city, about the year 1802. He was then engaged in *Boston* where he played two seasons with great eclat. He afterwards joined Mr. PLACIDE's Company in *Charleston, (S. C.)* where he still remains.

Mr. BLAND is not deficient in the secondary parts of *tragedy*, yet *comedy*, and more particularly *opera*, are his favourite walks. In the character of *Shacabac* (Blue Beard) and that of *Sadi* (Mountaineers) we have not seen his equal. His farce has too much grimace, and his tragedy too much rant. He is particularly successful in depicting the sensation of *grief*—This observation applies to his *Durimel* (Point of Honor) in which he has obtained the greatest applause.

Mr. BLAND's person, was certainly never formed for the stage. He is not tall, but thick—and his mouth has obtained the very descriptive appellation of an *oven-mouth*. He possesses great taste and skill in singing, and is a proficient in instrumental music.

The character of Mr. BLAND has been much traduced. Although very *imprudent*, he possesses a good heart, and very lively feelings. He is by no means a person of great literary attainments, but is generally correct in his conception of whatever part he undertakes, and seldom offends the ear of delicacy, by the *murder* of *sense*.

The American Stage.

Imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis.....Cicero.
The Imitation of Life...the Mirror of Manners...the Transcript of Truth.

THEATRICAL REGISTER.

"*'Tis with our judgments, as our watches....none*
"*Go just alike,...but each believes his own.*"

MONDAY, FEB. 17.

Romeo and Juliet (Shakspeare)—*My Grandmother*—3d. time (Prince Hoare.)

The little which we saw of Mr. YOUNG's *Romeo* (having been detained from the Theatre until the conclusion of the 4th act) exceeded our expectation. He was notwithstanding faulty—and we must recommend

to him to bestow some preparatory study before he aspires to the more elevated characters of SHAKSPEARE, whose plays are as difficult to represent with accuracy, as they are superior to the works of common dramatists. LADY MONTAGUE relates an instance of a lady at Constantinople, who fell in love with a *dictionary*. If this gentleman could form a like attachment, and take advantage of the passion by correcting his accent and pronunciation, he would give pleasure, where now he offends propriety. He must also pay some respect to his *Author*, and be careful to avoid blundering on the

"EMPTY account of BEGGARLY boxes,"

for such mistakes will not make "the Charmer in [his] turn feel the pleasing effects of a good benefit."*

Reading and literary information, are *essentials* to a good actor; and a perfect acquaintance with at least *one* language is *indispensible*. The celebrated KEMBLE, is said to have bestowed months, and indeed years upon single characters—It is not unmeaning "words, words, words!" which *he* commits to memory—it is ideas, ideas, ideas.—*He* studies the approbation of the *judicious*—not the applauses of the million—Was such the case with Mr. YOUNG, and would he in the first place correct his pronunciation, and then endeavour to give us what is theatrically called *just readings*—his voice, person and gesture, would answer for themselves. The patient study of Walker's standard of Pronunciation, and his Rhetorical Dictionary, with an accurate conception of the parts which he undertakes, can only fit him for a representation of the leading characters of the plays of Shakspeare. Mrs. JOHNSON's *Juliet*, was interesting.

The afterpiece was better performed than before. The more we see of Mrs. JONES, the more we are impressed in her favour. The effect with which she gives the celebrated masquerade song must be witnessed to be conceived. One fault however, of no small magnitude occurred;—not indeed attributable to her, but in which perhaps it may be said she partook—it was beginning the song in too quick time to allow her to pronounce the words with her accustomed distinctness.

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* *See the remarks on Mr. Gilfert's Concert, signed "Amiteur" in No. 7.*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19.

Who wants a Guinea—3d and last time (Colman Jun.)—*Poor Soldier* (O Keefe.)

Mrs. JONES was successful in her representation of the *Poor Soldier*. The novelty of the undertaking excited great interest, and doubtless attracted a better house than any other cast; but still we must say, whatever precedent there may exist for it, it is a part in which we never again wish to see this favourite actress. It is unworthy of her.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21.

Deserted Daughter (Holcroft)—*Raising the Wind* (Kenney).

In justice to Mr. TYLER and Mrs. JOHNSON, it is proper to observe that the comedy this evening received its principal support from their exertions, in the parts of *Mordent* and *Joanna*. We were highly gratified with Mrs. BARRET's representation of the dignified and noble *Lady Ann*. Messrs. HOGG and MARTIN in the two sharpers, *Item* and *Grime* were very successful; the former was particularly happy. Mr. HALLAM, Jun. did much for the part of *Lenox*. Mrs. G. MARSHALL performed Mrs. *Sarsnet* with characteristic spirit. The beauties of a principal character in the play, were lost in the *frisk, snapping of singers, kicking of heels,* and unintelligible *gabble* of its representative.

Should the afterpiece be repeated, we would recommend (in order to "suit the *action* to the *word* and the *word* to the *action*) an exchange of dress, between *Diddler* and *Fainwou'd*.

For the Thespian Mirror.

FUGITIVE LUCUBRATIONS.

NO. III.

MR. EDITOR,

There is no people whose fate I contemplate with greater enthusiasm and regret, than that of the Swiss nation. Encircled by mountains which seemed erected, as natural barriers against the vices and the encroachments of her neighbours; possessing a soil, which is cultivated with fatigue, and traversed with danger; she seems formed by nature to be the nursery of manly virtue. Her soldiers, admired by every power in Europe for their personal valor, and an unalterable fidelity to their trusts

have been seen to encircle in the midst of his own subjects, the person of the monarch. Nor were they less remarked for their patriotism, than their fidelity—Driven abroad by professional necessity; they chaunted in many a plaintive air, the memories of their homes; they never lost in their fidelity to a foreign power, the zeal of domestic enthusiasm; nor in the flattering preference of their employers, the regrets of an honorable exile.

In a Swiss my imagination has ever painted to me a man; virtuous, patriotic, unalterable to his trust; bold, hardy and enthusiastic. His country;—the ruins of a stately fabric; reared on the virtues of its citizens, and demolished by the ambition and intrigue of a perfidious neighbour.

I have somewhere met with a little anecdote, which illustrates most strikingly the fidelity and enthusiasm which I have been speaking of. On the imprisonment of Louis the sixteenth, and his unfortunate family; such of the Swiss guards as had not been previously massacred in the defence of their sovereign, had either escaped from Paris, or were dispersed and concealed through its environs. During the painful captivity of the Bourbons it was their undeviating practice (until prohibited by the barbarity of their persecutors) to devote the hour of midnight to their God. On one of these interesting occasions, being assembled as usual, they were startled at the unexpected sound of an instrument under the window of their prison, and while they listened in breathless silence, a voice from below, as if fearful of breaking their repose, sang the plaintive air of "*Oh Richard Oh my King!*"—It was a survivor of the Swiss guards, who had stolen in the silence of midnight to weep the sufferings of his King. The pious enthusiasm of the unseen minstrel was irresistible—The Queen melted into tears; and Louis turning to her with emotion, exclaimed, "Thanks be to heaven we have yet *one* loyal subject!—The orison of the faithful Swiss left behind it a soothing sadness, and the noble sufferers, blended with their homage to their God, a tribute to the virtues of a country, which their subjects have since desolated and enslaved.

B.

SOPHIA WOODBINE.

A Tale of Truth from the MSS. of a Lady.

(Continued from page 55.)

———AFTER my anguish was something abated, and I began to look around me with a degree of composure, I found the insults of Alzira to be more intolerable to me as Mrs. Harcourt, than they were to Sophia Wood-

bine. . . . . And I grew the more impatient of my clandestine marriage, as one of the servants who witnessed our nuptial ceremony, had treacherously reported it to the world.

The treatment of Alzira I injudiciously undertook to resent, which caused frequent altercations between my husband and myself, till at the expiration of the prescribed term, I reminded Harcourt of his promise, and gave him to understand that his mistress or myself must quit the house;——but how was I struck when he replied, that "*I might go*—but the woman and her child, must remain with him!!"

Can I paint to you my emotions at this crisis! to be driven from the house of my husband, for a kept mistress, and an unnatural child—after having deserted the man who possessed my entire affections—for one of sixty three, whom I married merely from motives of gratitude! How painful were the sensations it excite! Oh God! O God! how was that heart torn, which had so often bled in vain!

Yet was not Harcourt so base as to entirely neglect me He offered me a retreat about twelve miles from his residence in London, of which, having no other refuge, I gladly accepted. Settled in my charming mansion, I enjoyed every pleasure which the scenes around me could afford, and should have regained my long lost happiness, were it not for the coldness, and inattention of my husband.

Meanwhile my only visitors, consisted of my brother and sister-in-law and a gentleman whom they introduced, by the name of Carrol. This man, ignorant of my marriage, attempted every means in his power, to ingratiate himself into my good opinion: and at length prevailed on my hypocritical brother in law, to plead for him! Notwithstanding my bad treatment from Harcourt,it was only with sentiments of disgust that I heard him recount his tale, when he advised me to fly instantly with Carrol. To this villainous request I replied with a decided negative, treating his meanness, with its deserved contempt.

Exasperated at his ill success, RANSTAR (my brother-in-law) wrote to my husband, observing that I had entertained a person at my house, with whom he suspected I was criminally connected. This was enough for Harcourt: who, tho' he indulged in all licentiousness himself, could not rest satisfied with the thought that I allowed of attentions from others. He came immediately to town; and wrote me from the Inn, for some articles which Alzira wanted: I replied that I would not comply with a demand, which was made only to supply his *mistress* with things which belonged to his *wife*.

(To be continued.)

THEATRICAL INTELLIGENCE.

Mr. COOPER has nearly completed his engagement at *Boston*: He observes in a letter to a friend here, that he "shall be in this city on Wednesday, the 5th of March, at 2 o'clock precisely."

FENNEL closed his successful engagement at *Philadelphia*, on Wednesday, 19th instant, with the play of *Earl of Essex*.

The orphan children of Mr. HODGKINSON, have had a benefit at Boston. The performance consisted of the "West Indian" and "Children in the Wood.,' We have not yet ascertained its success.

The benefits at *Philadelphia*, commence on Monday next, with Mrs. WIGNELL's night.

We insert, without comment, the following communication. It is published literally *as received.*

MASTER EDDYTOR,

The Acktors Air verry much Displesd with your remarcks on thaire purformences, for they thinck everry thing That is say'd about thare *badness*——against them I am thairfour cum to ax you not to say notthing about the playrs if you cant say notthing *good*—for thay thinkes itt is a grate impurtenance for a *little buoy* to make his obbsurvasions Even in Caise thay air write—i am Not a Acktor, but a FRIND TO THEM.

Wenesday mon.
feb 12.

Poetry.

To the Editor of the Thespian Mirror.

SIR,

The following fragment is committed to you without the consent of the plaintive writer—should it excite any interest except in the bosom of friendship, that friendship will be answerable for its appearance.

Yours,

SYLVANUS.

LINES————*By Lavinia.*

Thy song Lodinus, like the spell unseen
That charms from rocks, and woods, a soft response,
From a wild Harp, to sorrow silent long
Wakes the faint mimic strain—Oh for thy power,
Electric as heaven's fire, to give the heart,
Chill'd by despair's Torpedo-touch, a beat
Unknown before.—Yet tho' the simple Muse,
No note accordant to thine own should raise;
Still may the vale-flow'rs which to thee she brings,
Bound with the laurel, with the myrtle wreath'd,
Blush round the brow, where genius sits enthron'd;
While o'er their pensive hue, with melting eye,

Thy own, thy dear SERENA, smiles, soft as
The summers twilight, sweet as to thee, the
Mem'ry of her dawning love—And, if the
World (sweet Bard! whose leaden sense, ne'er felt
Thy fancy's facinating wand with cold
Injustice frown's, if keen ey'd envy, with
Her slander tongue, e'er cause, thy gentle heart
A pang—that floating, airy, form, which lights
Thy fancy's visionary dreams, will break
The potent charm of woe, or varying with
Thy feeling soul; will mark thine orb's quick ray,
Or mourn its sadder beam—And one whose strain
Is rugged as her fate, tho' thy bright form
Should never meet her eye, still fondly marks
Thy mind's effulgence, that like morning's beam
In cheerful splendor breaking on the plain;
Or ev'ning suns thro' mist and clouds that shine
Will paint an IRIS on her tears————

TO VIOLA.

Oh fairest of the lovely train
Who grace MANHATTAN's favor'd Isle,
List to thy lover's plaintive strain
And deign to cheer him with a smile.
In the dark lustre of thine eyes
Where sense and sweetness mingled reign
Let one soft beam of pity raise
To recompence his constant pain—
For tedious days and months of grief
Of burning tears, and wishes vain,
May surely ask some small relief
May hope a trifling boon to gain—
Yet thou unmindful of my woe
Minglest the festive croud among
Where joys, in varying measures flow
Of wit and laughter, dance and song.
Amidst these scenes, oh maid most dear,
Wilt thou ne'er give one thought to me
Whate'er the semblance, I may wear.
I pine in thought, and pine for thee.

LORENZO.

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